

Group 3 Lessons Learned Session

Engagement Issues

= Communication

- 1. How to affect (+, -) # of sign ups?**
- 2. How to increase # of students pre-testing/attending orientation**
 - a.** Develop relationship with enrollee, have multiple meetings before class begins to create relationship and confirm interest
 - b.** Increase opportunities to join class – when individuals sign up and have to wait weeks before joining class
 - c.** Communicate – call and remind before orientation, before testing, before 1st day of class
 - d.** Reach out to community – go to local churches, bring along a former student, put up posters at community centers, state agencies.
 - e.** Incentives – enter students' names in a raffle who return for testing, enroll. One agency waives enrollment fee for 2nd semester if learner returns.
 - f.** Testing – one agency with ABE learners was giving the complete battery all in one go – it was recommended that they assess with the locator and do a pre test in a targeted area – esp. as these learners are not going to do GED testing this year.

Retention/Persistence Issues

= Students need to feel they are progressing towards their goals.

- 1. How to maintain retention/persistence beyond the first 3 weeks?**
- 2. How to reduce # of students leaving before they have 12 hours of instruction?**

- a.** Placement
- b.** Focused Instruction
- c.** Individual Attention/Communication

Agencies felt that the keys to persistence/retention were appropriate placement, focused instruction, and individual attention. That is, learners needed good assessment and discussion at the outset so that learners were clear on their educational status and plans. They needed good instruction that was targeted to their goals. An example of this was the creation of the Fast Track GED program at CCRI. Learners who only needed a boost in one particular score were frustrated in the regular GED program. This new class meets their goals. Additionally, they felt that many problems that interfere with persistence can be identified and solved if good communication occurs with learners. If a learner is

leaning towards dropping out and the agency works with them to problem solve around child care, conflicts with a particular teacher, etc, their persistence will improve.

3. How to increase attendance of ABE students? (lower than ESOL)

- a.** LD support - Many ABE learners have LD issues. If an agency has tools to identify and support these learners, they will more likely feel a sense of progress.
- b.** Realistic Targets- Learners who enroll in ABE classes usually identify the GED as a goal. It is very important to work with the learner to understand where they are in their path, and to set realistic goals in reasonable time frames. Eg, increasing reading score, reviewing progress in writing work. Focus on what learner is gaining.
- c.** Brainstorm Barriers/Solutions - in the first week those issues that prevented success in high school. Learners gain a sense of belonging and solidarity when they see that other learners had similar obstacles. They need to be assured that this experience will, indeed, be different and that they can work together and with the instructor to overcome or handle differently obstacles that prevented progress before.
- d.** Remind – them that to progress from 6th – 12th grade takes 6 years as a young person.

4. How to increase persistence in evening programs? (lower than day)

- a.** Our group did not have this issue. Evening attendance was as good as, if not better than, daytime.

Advancement/Progress/Gains

1. How to increase # of students post-tested?

- a.** Specific post test – post test learner in targeted area.
- b.** Timing – test learners every 6 weeks.
- c.** Communication – with teachers, with learners. Essential to stay on top of post testing, hours, and students' schedules and lives. If you know a learner is going on vacation, changing jobs, etc., ask them to get the post test taken care of. Pizza is a good tool. Use it.

2. How to capture advancements made not covered/caotyred bty the post test?

- a.** Internal activities – Recognize learners for important milestones. Celebrate best attendance, completing the program itself, etc.